

AMENDMENTS TO THE ABSTRACT

After the claims, please insert a page containing the Abstract, which is currently amended as follows, and which is attached hereto as a separately typed replacement page.

-- The present invention concerns a method for improving plant growth characteristics, comprising increasing, in a monocotyledonous plant, expression of a nucleic acid encoding an ~~NFIX~~NHX protein and/or increasing activity of an ~~NFIX~~NHX protein, wherein said plant is grown under non-salt stress conditions. --